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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ APR 0562
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE 3738
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 2519
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 0694
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TAGS: PREL MARR MASS MOPS SNAR PTER EC CO

SUBJECT: PLAN ECUADOR FOR PEACE, JUSTICE, AND EQUITY

RELEASED

Classified By: PolOff Jarahn Hillsman, Reasons 1.4 (b&d)

¶1. (C) Summary: President Rafael Correa on April 24 unveiled "Plan Ecuador for Peace, Justice, and Equity," aimed at countering the negative impacts of Colombia's internal conflict on Ecuador. The plan purports to guide GOE and international donor development activity in the northern border region thru 2018. Long on general themes and short on specifics, the Plan lists goals of strengthening provincial and municipal institutions, promoting economic development, improving social services, enhancing natural resource management, countering illicit activities, protecting human rights and supporting displaced persons, and safeguarding national sovereignty. Plan Ecuador seems in part designed to embarrass its northern neighbor as well as to change realities on the ground. However, a more integrated and well-coordinated GOE approach to these issues would in fact be useful. The GOE hopes to attract more international aid with the Plan. While still welcoming USG assistance, they clearly prefer to give a higher profile to any and all others. End Summary.

Correa Unveils "Plan Ecuador" Amidst Fanfare

¶2. (U) President Correa on April 24 unveiled "Plan Ecuador for Peace, Justice, and Equity" to diplomats, international organization representatives, military officials, municipal and provincial officials, and civil society leaders gathered at the Presidential Palace. He was accompanied at the event by Minister Coordinator for Internal and External Security Fernando Bustamante, Foreign Minister Maria Espinosa, and Defense Minister Lorena Escudero. PolMilOff and AidOff represented the USG. Correa declared that Plan Ecuador would guide the GOE's policy in the northern border region, and would focus on peace rather than violence. He lamented the negative affects of Colombia's internal conflict on Ecuador, claiming adverse health and environmental impacts in Ecuador of aerial glyphosate spraying on the Colombian side of the border. Correa also stressed the need to work with Colombia to find solutions to common border problems. On April 24, Correa sent Ambassador Alejandro Suarez back to Bogota after a four-month absence to protest the spraying.

¶3. (U) Correa welcomed international participation and funding of his plan, which calls for \$130 million in investment. Any foreign participation would be guided by principles laid out in the Plan. UNDP Representative Mauricio Valdes read a letter from UN SecGen Ban Ki-moon commanding Ecuador for its initiative. Valdes said the UN

remains committed to supporting development and displaced persons efforts in northern Ecuador. Ki-moon's missive noted ongoing UN technical support being provided to Ecuador for development of the bi-national plan with Colombia and urged the two nations to work together.

Inter-Agency Approach to border Issues

¶4. (U) "Plan Ecuador" will target the northern provinces of Esmeraldas, Carchi, Imbabura, Sucumbios, and Orellana, providing special attention to the cities of San Lorenzo, Cascales, Lago Agrio, and Putumayo. The plan is valid thru 2018 with progress reviews required every four years. Implementation of the Plan will be led by Minister Coordinator for Internal and External Security Fernando Bustamante, in coordination with Minister Coordinator for Social Development Nathalie Cely, the Foreign and Defense Ministers, and the Minister of Government. Municipal governments, provincial councils, human rights groups, social organizations, and the Secretariat of Communities and Social Movements will each have one representative on the review committee.

¶5. (SBU) The GOE's proposed budget of Plan Ecuador is approximately \$130 million. It will reportedly be funded by the national government, municipal and provincial governments, and international donors. The press reports that Canada has already offered \$5 million, South Correa \$900,000, and Norway an unspecified amount. A UNDP representative told PolOffs that the UN, which had previously encouraged Ecuador to develop a comprehensive plan for border development in concert with Colombia, would likely fund \$2 million for development projects under the Plan and would encourage additional donor participation.

The Seven Points of Plan Ecuador

¶6. (U) Plan Ecuador lists no specific projects or next steps, focusing instead on broad strategic goals including promoting the consolidation of security and a culture of peace; maintaining a policy of international relations based on equity and solidarity; affirming a defense policy focused on protecting citizens, natural resources and patrimony; and controlling Ecuadorian territory. The plan offers the following seven areas for GOE engagement in the region:

--Strengthen Institutions for Peace and Development: Improve the technical and financial capacity of provincial and municipal governments, town councils, and social organizations.

--Promote Economic Development and Job Creation: Generate employment in tourism, productive agriculture, fishing, transportation, and other areas.

--Improve Basic Social Services: Improve the coverage and quality of basic services for residents living in the border region, especially in rural and marginalized urban areas. Focus on health, education, and basic social services to support productive activities.

--Improve Natural Resource Management: Develop mechanisms for conservation and sustainable use of national resources; encourage use of clean technologies in resource extraction; improve the production and transport of natural resources; preserve the region's fragile ecosystems.

--Justice and Control of Illicit Activities: Strengthen prevention methods and national intelligence collection practices to better counter illicit activities and achieve a reduction of crime in the border region. Adopt long-term methods for addressing narcotics trafficking, arms trading, money laundering, precursor chemicals smuggling, trafficking in persons, organized crime, and corruption.

--Human Rights, Humanitarian Assistance, and Refuge Support: Guarantee the protection of the border population's human

rights. Fulfill international obligations by providing humanitarian assistance and refuge to displaced persons.

--Protection of National Sovereignty and Integrity of the State: Reaffirms Ecuador's position of no intervention in the internal affairs of other countries; rejects the use of force in international relations; find peaceful solutions to conflicts. The GOE will not participate in combined or coordinated military operations with the Colombia military, preferring political, diplomatic, judicial, and other non-military responses to combat arms smuggling, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, kidnapping, extortion, and illicit activity.

USG Interests

¶7. (C) Plan Ecuador could help bring national and international attention to the historic neglect of the border region, and to the security threats posed by international criminal and terror groups now active in Ecuador. It is undeniable, however, that the GOE's initiative sidesteps an opportunity to bring the previous government's binational development efforts to fruition in favor of proclaiming Ecuador's unilateral victimhood from Colombia's internal conflict. On paper, the Plan notes the aerial glyphosate spraying issue as just one of several reasons for establishing the policy. The return of Ecuador's ambassador to Bogota may be a sign of goodwill to cushion the anti-Colombia publicity blitz surrounding the unveiling of the Plan. USG security and development interests in the border region are unlikely to be affected by the plan and in fact, a better coordinated GOE strategy could be helpful. While publicly there appears to be a conscious effort by the GOE to omit any recognition of USG contributions to security and development efforts in the northern border region, privately the GOE has signaled its desire to maintain and even increase USG engagement and investment.

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